

SPILL BRIEFS

18-03

www.scaa-spill.org

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- ♦ **Editorial:** The biggest news this week continues to be the oil spill clean up effort in Buzzard's Bay, and links to the latest stories related to the spill are posted on SCAA's web site at www.scaa-spill.org in the "Media" section. You can also find Coast Guard press releases on the spill at www.uscg.mil/d1, and then clicking the link to "News". It was brought to our attention this week that a press release which had been issued contained the following: "Volunteers for shoreline cleanup can call the Coalition for Buzzard's Bay . . .", with the applicable phone number provided. Through the auspices of the Partnership Action Team, this issue was brought to the attention of Capt. Westerholm for his review and investigation. The Coast Guard was very prompt in responding, saying that no volunteers were involved in the cleanup of the spilled oil. The Coalition for Buzzard's Bay was using volunteer services to staff a bird cleaning facility; act as guides for SCAT teams; conducting clean beach cleanup (i.e., removing debris, garbage, driftwood, etc.) from clean beaches to reduce the impact in case of re-oiling; and dissemination of information to the community on awareness, hazards, etc. While none of the press releases stated that volunteers were actually being used to clean up oiled beaches, the use of volunteers in this regard has long been a concern of SCAA, its members, and the response industry. With the national decline in oil spill occurrences, most of our industry is trying to remain viable through a variety of avenues, many of which don't directly relate to spill response. However, when a spill does occur, the private sector response community needs to be provided with every reasonable opportunity to respond with its trained and experienced resources - the thought of having these professional resources displaced by volunteers is both concerning and disheartening. As you know, the use of volunteers to help clean up major oil spills occurring outside the U.S. has become very prevalent - one needs only to look at the response to the "Nakhodka", "Erika", and "Prestige" disasters to see evidence of this statement. To take it a step further, WWF-Finland has is seeking volunteers between the ages of 18 and 69 to clean up oil in the event a spill hits Finland's coast, and they have received hundreds of registrations so far. A Finnish oil company has even agreed to provide boots, overalls, gloves, shovels and brushes to these volunteers to aid with the effort. Keep in mind the phrase "perception is reality" - if the perception is that it's okay to use volunteers to cleanup oil spills, it may very well become a reality regardless of the significant health, safety, and liability issues associated with using volunteer labor. As an Association, we have discussed with the USCG and other agencies tasked with environmental protection the importance of maintaining the private sector's overall national response capability, which includes the maintenance and renewal of equipment resources and the retention of seasoned personnel. The use of volunteers to clean up oil spills undermines this tenet, and threatens the very viability of the national response asset we are trying to maintain. ***You get what you pay for - and if you don't pay, there is a difference!***
- ♦ This week, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta announced the appointment of John Jamian as the Deputy Administrator for the Department of Transportation's ("DOT's") Maritime Administration ("MARAD"). In his position, Mr. Jamian will assist in leading the operations of an 850-person agency that includes five regional offices and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. He will also oversee issues regarding the Great Lakes and inland waterways, deepwater ports, and segments of the Marine Transportation system initiative. (Source: *USDOT Press Release, Maritime Items*)



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- ◆ House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Christopher Cox (R-California) recently announced his intent to offer a bill by summer's end that would make substantial revisions to the law that ultimately created the Homeland Security Department. The bill is expected to be non-technical, substantive, and essentially a revisitation of the Homeland Security Act. Cox, along with other Congressional representatives, believes that the Act – which resulted in the largest government reorganization in recent history - warrants a review to fix problems that were made in haste. (Source: *GovExec.com*)
- ◆ One of the more extensive collections of technical documents on the Internet for environmental professionals can be found at <http://synectics.net/resources/>. This on-line library is provided as a free service to the environmental community, and worth a look next time you are on line.
- ◆ The State of Washington's Department of Ecology recently issued an overview of its proposal to update the state's oil spill contingency plan regulations. The overview can be found on line at www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/preparedness/contrule/contrule.html. Under the proposal, vessel and facility plans would be consolidated, only state approved clean up contractors could be used, and benchmarks would be set to determine if the plan holder has access to enough response equipment. (Source: *Maritime Items*)
- ◆ The Transportation Security Administration ("TSA") is planning to eliminate the jobs of some 6,000 passenger screeners by September. In late March, the TSA announced a workforce realignment plan that included reducing the 56,000-member screener workforce by 3,000 employees by May 31, 2003. On April 30, the TSA announced that another 3,000 employees would be trimmed from the workforce by the end of FY2003. (Source: *GovExec.com*)
- ◆ **Congratulations!** to SPC's Thom Sousa, who was recently appointed as the company's Northwest Regional Sales Manager for Alaska, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho.
- ◆ Last week, the federal government held a ribbon-cutting ceremony at CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia for its new Terrorist Threat Integration Center ("TTIC"), which will be made up of counterterrorism analysts and agents from the CIA and FBI. The TTIC will combine intelligence from across government about terrorists, their plans and operations to better understand where future threats lie. (Source: *GovExec.com*)
- ◆ **Work/Life/Health:** As you know, the relationship between customers and the service they receive is the foundation of their faith in a company. Consider the following ideas to help strengthen customer trust and loyalty: (1.) **Talk more often.** When customers know the status of their request, question, or work order, they don't have time to assume anything. (2.) **Name the obstacles.** Instead of just letting customers know when there is a problem, let them in on the obstacle – they'll be happy you let them know and will feel like they are in the loop. (3.) **Remain confident.** Customers will lose heart when they don't feel you're confident about what you're saying. (Source: *Customer Service Advantage*)
- ◆ **Quote of the Week:** "These are the times in which a genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life, or in the repose of a pacific station, that great characters are formed . . . Great necessities call out great virtues." – Abigail Adams (1744-1818), *Letter to John Quincy Adams [January 19, 1780]*

Disclaimer: Although the Spill Control Association of America has made every effort to be accurate, unintentional errors may appear.